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Melvin R. Wettergreen, 77, CIA retiree

Melvin R. Wettergreen, 77, a retired administrative officer for the Central Intelligence Agency and a composer of popular songs, died Thursday in Sibley Memorial Hospital after a long illness. He lived in Bethesda.

He joined the Naval Intelligence Reserve in 1946 after serving in World War II and retired as a commander in 1969.

Mr. Wettergreen worked for the Naval Bureau of Ships from 1946 to 1951 and was with the National Production Authority for three years before joining the CIA in 1953. He retired from the CIA as an administrative officer in 1969 and was awarded the Certificate of Merit.

For the next several years he worked part-time as a special agent in the office of security for the secretary of defense.

He was a member of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers. Under the nickname of "Mel," he wrote music and lyrics for radio and television shows, including programs featuring Fred

Astaire, Arthur Godfrey and Johnny Green. More than 20 of his songs have been recorded and one of his songs, "Don't Ya Think I Oughta Know," was listed in Billboard magazine as the top rhythm and blues song of the year in the late 1940s.

Mr. Wettergreen had served on the advisory board of the American Security Council and was a former director of the board of governors of the Men's Republican Club. He was a member of the Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church for more than 40 years, and he was an elder and deacon and served on numerous committees.

He was also a member of the Retired Officers Association and two honorary fraternities, Beta Gamma Sigma and Pi Sigma Alpha.

Mr. Wettergreen was born in Bridgewater, S.D., and graduated from the University of Iowa in 1926. He received a master's degree in public administration from American University.

He worked for International Harvester in Omaha, Neb., in the 1930s

before joining the Midwest offices of the Federal Land Bank and the Railroad Retirement Board. He was transferred to the board's Washington offices, and for a year before World War II was a security officer for the Civil Service Commission.

Mr. Wettergreen joined the Navy in 1941 and served as a security officer and then as a special agent with the Potomac River Command. He was transferred to the Pacific where he served on the intelligence staff of the 7th Fleet and later on the staff of Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

He is survived by his wife, Jeanette Wettergreen; a daughter, Sonya Turner of Grangeville, Idaho; a brother, Harris Wettergreen of Fontana, Calif.; and two grandchildren.

Friends may call from 2 to 4 and 7 to 9 p.m. tomorrow at the Hines-Rinaldi Funeral Home, 11800 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Wednesday in Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church, 1 Chevy Chase Circle, with burial in Arlington National Cemetery.